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THE POSITION OF THE ARTIST.

IN arranging our social system, we have considered the relations of the Worker in the material, in all his capacities, as Laborer, as Adventurer, as Capitalist, and have, by our use of the influences of law and public opinion, done all we may to protect him in each. We have gone further, and included in our plans the interests of those who, not being producers of the Actual in any form, have confided to them the preservation of that which is in danger of decay or injury—the Jurist, the Physician, and the Divine—the conservators of society. Yet in our organizations we have made no account of the Ideal: the Painter, the Sculptor and the Poet, are voted by all “assembled wisdoms” to be superfluities—queues which the world may wear or not.

Has the Artist a right to exist? Abstractly he has, any one will admit, as every one has a right to eat if he can get anything to eat; but that he has any claim on society, or has of right any position in it, we all practically deny. We emulate the magnificence of the munificent tyrants of past ages, who always had some poets, some painters, in their train, but only that they might add to their glory and stimulate their self-importance. They had generally their buffoon, who stood nearer to their majesties than either poet or painter. They rewarded the fool, and the Artist as they fostered their foibles or flattered their vanity. They gave them gifts, but never *paid* them anything, since the idea of service rendered was one not to be entertained.

So each man among us, as he attains to the position of a sovereign in a degree, bestows his largess on the painter who makes his walls richer, or who preserves his likeness for the admiration of future generations; and so, too, we cast our coppers to dancers and mountebanks. The Poet, thank God! has passed out of the hands of sovereignty in a measure, and can no longer be made to sing in a golden cago for the glorification of the individual man—free from *Mæcenas* and *Can Grande*, he is listened to as we listen to the birds of heaven, not because he is ours, but because he is divine. No longer the creature of Privilege, he lives in the universal heart of mankind, and though his robes of scarlet and golden decorations may be less, he eats the bread of

independence, and says what he says because he *desires* it, not because we prescribe it.

The Painter hopes from the emancipation of his brother the Poet, and looks out upon the day when, no longer the creature of individual vanity or insolent self-importance, he shall paint, not what patrons commission him to, but what his own soul commands of him; and when, instead of being required to follow a fashion, or make pictures according to popular perception, he shall be regarded as the Seer of the Beautiful, and shall be looked to as the instructor of that perception, who shall teach us what to see and how to see it. We do not suppose that all painters have this feeling. We know there are many who are willing to be the *appenda* to wealth and social rank, to keep a foothold in life by fostering pride and flattering vanity; but the true Artist has that desire for reverence and regard, not for himself, but for the truth given him to tell.

If he has a right to exist, then he has a right to that consideration and position which make existence easy. We talk fluently, in these times, of the right of labor, and say, truly, that society has no right so to organize itself that it shall cut off its humblest members from their dues of sunlight and of bread. Labor has rights, and will enforce them, or, at least, exact a terrible penalty for its disinheritance. It is necessary: and we know that to destroy the laborer is to cut off our hands—to strike at the root of the material interests of society. But, since it is an external necessity, it will be cared for; and the only question to the upper tiers of the social organization, is, how, most conveniently, to care for it and themselves at once. Art and Beauty have no such necessity—they are neither bread nor shelter, and men commonly pass successfully through life without the slightest care for them. Nations have been powerful and wealthy without being cognizant of their existence. They have no revolutionary right, and cannot force themselves into notice—they cannot exact the penalty of neglect—yet is it none the less exacted somehow and somewhere.

We say, the penalty is exacted, because a law is broken by thus leaving out the Teacher of the Ideal in our division of the

earth; and infraction of natural law brings its punishment with it. A German fable says, that when Jupiter divided the earth among his children, the Poet, modest and sensitive, was overlooked, and when the god found that there was no share left for him, he took him to dwell with himself in Olympus. So does the world. It divides the goods of this life among the strong, the cunning, and the clamorous. The Artist and Poet are sent up to Olympus and glorified. They would, probably, prefer to remain among their brethren, but the loss is not theirs—rather the world's. Subsistence may be denied them, but *their* perception and enjoyment of the Ideal cannot be taken away; and, if driven to Olympus, they not only take it with them, but take away the very guides by which their blind brethren might be made to see.

To speak more prosaically, it is society that suffers by the neglect of the artist; and it is the interest of society, therefore, to give him the position which his share in the soul-culture justifies. Having admitted his right to a place, it only remains to point it out, and then we may demand of him that he fill it worthily. How can we expect him to sustain a dignity when we assign him none? If we regard him as a pendant to our pride and vanity, we have sunk the teacher in the flatterer, who has no place in the true social system. We must look to him for new truth, feeling that that truth is essential to our own intellectual and spiritual development. We must insist that he shall make new revelations of the true nature of the external world—that in the province assigned to him he shall be the Discoverer, the Seer; and, in the event of his failing to do this, we must cast him out as an unfaithful worker, untrue to us and to his Art.

We would claim no undue honor for the Artist—no veneration further than we give it to every true man—but only that it shall be admitted that he has a necessary function in life—that he owes us something, and that we in turn have an indebtedness to him which cannot be discharged by simply buying works of Art, but only by making Art itself a study, and in that study taking those teachers who have been fitted as such by nature. We owe him attention and respect, not favor; and we

ourselves suffer most deeply from neglecting him.

ALLSTON'S ST. PETER IN PRISON.

A FEW years since I was on a visit in Leicestershire. While turning over a big portfolio of Roman drawings, precious to my hostess as *souvenirs* of youth and travel, I said to her, "So Coleorton is near this, do you know the Allston there?" "Not the least in the world," was the reply. "But you should:" upon which I recited the lines on the Rosalie, which, as the picture does, seem to have dropped out of some far-off, serenest Heaven.

My hostess was not noisy in her approval, was silent for a little, and then quietly said, "We will drive over to-morrow."

Ten o'clock the next day saw us bowling along those dreamy English roads, threading the chequer-work of light and shade, and looking around in the hedges upon the million facets of the dew, hid under every glossy leaf—the despair of Constable, and which he got at last to imitate with showers of white, falling at random on bush and beast. Unspeakably lovely was the drive; and when we were at the hall door, two things were plain:—First, why Wordsworth loved to come there: and the second, why Sir George Beaumont must love landscape painting.

The house is on a commanding slope with terraces not too stately, as should be, and overlooking one of the most admirably composed landscapes I ever saw. I was reminded of Italy. Something in the accidents of the ground, perhaps, for there were great platforms of turf picturesquely broken, happily-placed buildings, and afar, like the Past looking towards the Present, a glimpse of a ghostly abbey and the secular forest, which Beaumont the dramatist, that artist of the green days of England, loved so well. It was long before I could turn from the living picture without to the treat I knew to be in the house. The then proprietor was a nephew of the famous Sir George, and though not an amateur, of most alert and obliging hospitality.

There was, besides the pictures scattered through the house, a picture gallery; not large, well lighted from above with clouded glass, and remarkable as the first lodging and nest of men since famous. Sir George had a most friendly and appreciative eye for rising merit.

There was something very pleasing in seeing rows of Wilkie, Collins, Sir T. Lawrence, Mulready, Smirke, &c., &c., all with the down on; the modest, shy, unconfident manner, which is to such what Pre-Raphaelism is to the too grand and too triumphant San Sisto. There were no pictures which more interested me than those of good Sir George himself—always rich in color, and full of sentiment, not at all English, but such as few amateurs are able to be proud of. There was one, a picture Sir George was at work on the day he was struck with apoplexy, which his nephew found full of predictions of the catastrophe.

A number of boys were playing along a fallen tree over a brook. Every boy was off his balance. The crisis overhanging the poor man may have so unstrung his hand. "But, I see no Allston,"

said I. "Ah! no, that is in yonder little church, the only picture worthy of it. Great man, Allston; Sir George very fond of him. Come see," and he rushed for the keys. Close to the house, shaded by noble cedars, and rooted in the emerald turf, stood the little church. It was just the fitting shrine for Allston's picture, and alone kept holy watch there. I was left to enjoy the picture alone. Often had I heard Allston fondly discourse of it, of the surprise his method was to the artists, and of the rapidity of its execution. I had, too, seen in Boston the masterly sketch for the Saint's Head, whose foreshortening astonishes, and which now must be in New York.

The picture must be some 20 feet square. An angel stands at the open prison door on the first of a short flight of steps, and his brightness falls upon the upturned face of Peter, struck with joy and devout awe, and seeking to rise from his prison pallet. Beyond, the drowsed guards are lost in shadow, while over them, looks in the cheerless circle of the moon, cut by the iron grating of the cell. There is none of the comfort in this disheartening moon which streams from the angel's features.

No solace nor help in that tremendous gloom could our daily miracles afford. To pierce this, was needed "the light which never was on sea or land."

I who hold that in spiritual height and depth, in exquisite and most original color (at the same pitch as that of Venice, but touched to subtler issues) in grandeur of design, and almost everything but solid force and energy, Allston is of late time without a peer—need I say how much I was delighted?

My half hour was interrupted by the baronet's return. "Angel a *leettle* heavy, eh!" said he, jogging my ribs. Yes, I replied cheerfully, nearly as largely modelled as one of Raffaelles.

After this, I was shown the choicest points of view, those beloved by Wordsworth and Sir George, and complimented with benches or tablets with verse from Wordsworth's hand. At my feet was the ebb and flow of the great cedar shadows, above were their whispers, now retreating to silence, and soon striking with cheerful music the strain of the thoughts and feelings belonging to the place, while around in the valley swam in the uneventful English noon, that imaginative confusion of tree, and stream, and hamlet, which, always inviting, never submits to analysis.

Sitting then on a seat Wordsworth had placed to enjoy what I enjoyed, I scratched these careless lines, to record my friendly and now sacred pilgrimage.

Beneath this darkling cedar's dome
I sit, but forth my feelings fly,
Allston, to thy celestial home,
An angel now in yon blue sky.

A portion of thy soul divine
Is fitly shrined in that meek aisle,
Whose arching roofs in prayer incline,
And chasten all the tranquil pile.

There, with a lustre not of earth,
Our heavenly brother points the way,
Past Death's dark portal to a birth,
And Life renewed in ceaseless day.

Methought while gazing on his face,
Pictured by thee so sweetly fair,
Thine angel lineaments to trace,
Ennobled from all touch of care.

Thy body seemed the imprisoned saint,
Who but half knew his heavenly guest;
Trailed in the dust, with watchings faint,
And Earth's vile tyranny oppressed.

But now transfigured, both ascend
Through bright and brighter spheres of bliss
Whence down in pity on us bend,
Thine eyes to comfort us in this.

THE WILDERNESS AND ITS WATERS.

CHAPTER III.

THE CAMP.

WE were disposed for our journey in this wise. Angler took the smaller boat, rowed by our hostess' son Bill, with the heavy luggage, bread-box and valises, and Siudent and myself, with the blankets, the fowling-piece and the lighter articles, embarked in the other, managed by the new-comer who rejoiced in the same nick-name, but whom, for distinction's sake, I will call by his surname, Moodie. He was a rough specimen of the genus guide, strong as a horse, and brown as one of Angler's bronze statues.

We made up our loads and started up the lake, Angler, as the veteran, leading the way. The day was exceedingly quiet, and the sultriness settled down around us till we were fain to throw our coats off to breathe. The haze had been gathering through the morning, and the sky was growing grey and leaden, and, along the horizon, a heavy, dull purple. The mountains passed away into such thin films that the eye could scarcely distinguish them from the mists. Here and there a catpaw left its dash of blue across the distant water, which with a gentle tremor, half mingled and half distinguished the images on its surface.

A sail of about three miles brought us to the head of the lake. Here we were to "carry over" to the next chain of lakes, a distance of about a mile, over which our equipments, boats and all, were to be carried on the backs of our guides. A hard trodden path through the pine woods, used by the hunters and the few dwellers in that inner wilderness, indicated the way, and taking our rods and the most fragile of our traps, we left the guides to get the heavier portions over at their leisure, and walked forward. An Indian village, Moodie said, had once been situated on this "carrying-place," and we could see that the pines here were all of the second growth, small and scrubby, the ground free from underbrush and quite level, as though it might have been cultivated once; and the whole place had an entirely different air from that of the woods around. The forest pines grow slender, and have no limbs on the lower part of their trunks, and the decaying bodies of their predecessors lie on the ground beneath, overgrown with ferns and heavy mosses; but here the pines were thick-set, with limbs nearly down to the roots, and the soil was unencumbered, and covered with a scanty grass, showing that the sun had been accustomed to shine in. The path we travelled by, had probably existed many centuries, and we could not help thinking of the race who had passed away from treading it, as we walked beneath the dense shade of the trees that had grown on their cornfields.

Our walk brought us to a little gem of a lake where we would take boat again, and